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Pairing of schools in New York City illustrates that city's commitment to the ideal of actual integration. The program broadens the concept of the neighborhood school into a community school.

There seem to exist at present in programs for disadvantaged children certain tendencies which have adverse consequences. First is the stereotyping of ethnic groups into a kind of homogenized unity. Second is a substitution of special programs of education for the few instead of sound programs of education for all. A third tendency has been to create a "cult of disadvantaged" in which the strengths of the disadvantaged are magnified and the real problems minimized. Fourth, there has been too much emphasis on diagnosis of problems and not enough effort placed on programs of improvement and remediation. Fifth, failures of the disadvantaged have been defined in terms which have little meaning for the solution to their problems. Sixth, there has been a tendency for the school to assume too much of the burden of preparing youth for life without calling on the rest of the community. Finally, the school has not taken advantage of civil rights protests and the reorienting effect on the community.

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Basically, this is what we have to say about these persons:

First of all, they tend to be rather well educated.

They are also persons who did not make their boycott decisions easily.

They tend to stress the *quality* of their children's education over the number of whites who happen to be enrolled in neighborhood schools.

They seem to have one unfortunate habit. They read newspapers and watch TV about as much as anyone else who feels concerned about local issues — but after they do this, they hesitate to check out their ideas with their neighbors.

They *probably* wind up believing that their neighbors listen to the same programs that they listen to — and that we listened to — and that the world is a sea of uncertainty and doubt, especially when it comes to school boycotts.

And then they decide to send their children to school on Freedom Day.

> Increasingly in the North, demonstrations are interpreted as being violent when in fact the violence is almost 100 percent from those attempting to suppress these protests. Events are turned upside down and made to be the opposite of what they are.
>
> —Rev. Robert W. Spike, May 4, 1964

PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL INTEGRATION

Jacob Landers

The author, assistant superintendent in charge of integration programs in New York City schools, was formerly coordinator of the Higher Horizons program. Based on the Kornberg Memorial Lecture at Queens College, May 14, 1964.

The academic year 1963-1964 has given many clear indications of the determination of New York City to maintain its position of leadership in the education of disadvantaged youngsters.

For twenty years or more, educators and psychologists have been talking about the inadequacy of group tests of intelligence for all children, and have been emphasizing their complete failure as tests of the intelligence of minority group children. Today, New York City stands as the only major city which has eliminated their use—surely a tremendous step forward.

Our after-school study centers now reach more than 100,000 children in more than 250 schools operating five days a week, at a cost of more than $3.5 million a year. For the children to whom time is crucial, we have extended the school day, with many opportunities for skilled instruction in small groups.

The most controversial of the recent proposals are those which relate to the pairing of schools, and I think that it is necessary to underscore their importance.

In the first place, they represent a symbol of the efforts of New York City to secure meaningful integration combined with quality education. Built into every one of the proposals is a plan for improved education and extended services. The actual number of schools involved may be few, but the value as a symbol of commitment to an ideal is great indeed.

Secondly, the concept of the neighborhood school has been broadened into that of the community school. The community is larger than the neighborhood, and includes children of varying ethnic groups.

In the third place, the idea of integration in school life is accepted as

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so important a principle that children may reasonably be asked to travel a little further to school for its sake.

All education is based upon values in which people believe. In a democracy, such values as patriotism, fair play, honesty, love of family, personal integrity and others are very important and serve as the bedrock upon which the structure of education is built.

Every value we hold dear has a price. The price of patriotism may well be life itself Fair play may lead to loss of a competition; honesty, to loss of money; personal integrity, to loss of job; love of family, to loss of friends. No value is worth much to an individual nor held dear unless he is willing, should the need arise, to pay something for clinging to it.

Almost all the people of our city profess to believe in integration as a value and as a way of life inherent in American democracy. Almost every objection to the present plan begins with the words, "I believe in integration but . . ."

Now each individual must ask himself "How much am I willing to pay for this value which we call integration?" In a culture which often seems to prize comfort and convenience above all, and whose newspapers advertise daily, "homes near schools," it may be too much to ask parents to suffer the inconvenience of having their children walk a few blocks further, or of having to ride a bus to school for a few minutes a day. It must be remembered that those values are embraced by the young which are esteemed by the old. If adults can indicate to the children their willingness to make a small personal sacrifice for the cause of integration, this fact in itself will be of tremendous significance in the struggle for a truly integrated society.

But regardless of individual inclination, the schools must exercise their leadership role in transmitting the values of democracy from one generation to another. Nor are the values the same; they change and grow and expand with the passage of time. A new dimension is being added to the framework of education, and a new criterion by which to judge the success of our efforts. The schools alone cannot bring about a fully integrated society; but they alone, among all the institutions of democracy, are powerful enough to force the value of integration into the stream of our collective consciousness. To do this, the schools must give positive evidence of their own commitment and of their own sacrifices.

SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

There seem to exist at the present time a number of tendencies or conditions which have become assimilated into some educational programs for the disadvantaged, and which may in my judgment have adverse consequences.

The first of these is the stereotyping of the disadvantaged and the lumping together of many individuals and many ethnic groups into a kind of homogenized unity. Negroes, Puerto, Ricans, Appalachian Whites, Mexicans, Indians and others fit under the same umbrella and are discussed in global fashion as though they were interchangeable parts of the machinery of education. At the same time, there is a growing tendency to focus on those aspects which are themselves atypical for these supposedly atypical groups—delinquency, drug addiction, parental neglect, and the like. In this process, the individual child seems to escape notice, unless he fits into the extremes of the academic or behavioral spectrum.

Indeed, the silent tragedy in the education of the disadvantaged is that the great majority:

who are *not* juvenile deliquents
who are *not* discipline problems
who are *not* truants
who are *not* alienated from society
who are *not* inferior in intelligence

that these pupils generally drop out of school before high school graduation, or, if they graduate, so often do not master the academic skills necessary for effective functioning in modern society.

This leads to a second tendency—the substitution of special programs of

improvement for the few instead of sound programs of education for all. Almost every major city in the country has its own euphonious title descriptive of unusual efforts being made for some of the disadvantaged. In a great many cases, these efforts represent little more than sound programs of education widely advocated for many years by leading educators and already practiced by many wealthy communities on behalf of children less needy than the disadvantaged.

A third tendency has been the creation of a kind of "cult of the disadvantaged" in which the strengths of the disadvantaged are magnified and their real problems minimized. While an elucidation of the real strengths of such children may represent a healthy corrective to existing viewpoints, there is danger that the pendulum will swing too far to the other side. Over-emphasis on imaginary academic strength may result in little more than personal guilt feelings on the part of many teachers.

This is not to deny the evident strengths of the disadvantaged. It is clear that they learn to cope with their own particular environment as well as other large groups of children, and in the process develop specific skills, habits, attitudes and strengths which are important in the solution of their own environmental problems. It is equally clear, however, that many of these strengths are dysfunctional in terms of the academic goals of the schools. A rich informal spoken language widely varying in pronunciation from the standard pattern may be prime evidence of high basic intelligence but it is of relatively little help in learning to read. Earlier desatellization from the home and greater independence may be important assets, but the resulting gang membership is rarely conducive to improvement in mathematics.

> We are not fighting for the right to be like you. We respect ourselves too much for that. When we fight for freedom, we mean freedom for us to be black, or brown, and you to be white and yet live together in a free and equal society. This is the only way that integration can mean dignity for both of us.
>
> —John Oliver Killens

The fact of the matter is that we have not really learned how to use the so-called strengths of the disadvantaged to reach positive academic goals. Every effort should be made to do this, of course, and it may even be that real improvement will come only when we have solved this basic problem. However, until that time comes, we must be extremely careful how we describe the assets of the disadvantaged.

Fourth, there has been the tendency to spend an inordinate amount of time on analysis and diagnosis of the problems of the disadvantaged, and too little time and energy on programs of improvement and remediation. The problem has been studied almost to death, and the proliferation of studies about why the disadvantaged don't learn really does not seem to help matters very much. Very often they do little more than to supply new vocabulary to help describe what we already know. They may explain why we fail, but they rarely help us succeed.

Fifth, there has been a tendency to describe the failure of the disadvantaged in terms which have little meaning for the solution to their problems, and to supply remedies which are largely irrelevant. Thus, for example, the whole concept of remedial reading as it has heretofore been developed in our schools, must be re-examined. In some elementary schools, eighty percent or more of the sixth grade pupils are below grade level in reading, and more than fifty percent are almost two years behind. Under such conditions, it simply does not make sense to speak about remedial reading for the few, when what is needed is a development program which will give to all pupils command over this basic skill. Remedial reading teachers may still be useful, of course, in specific situations for small groups of children. They cannot, however, solve the

problems of the inner city schools with their masses of retarded readers. These reading problems must be solved by teachers in sufficient numbers and with sufficient expertise to help all the children.

Sixth, there has been a tendency for the school to assume too much of the burden of preparation of youth for life in society without calling attention either to its own limitations or to the responsibilities of other segments of society. It is extremely doubtful that the present role of the schools is compatible with the resources which society has allocated for this purpose. In the field of integration, the school must attempt to close the gap between what society preaches and what it practices. Recent events have posed a real question as to whether society really wants this gap closed.

It is the function of the schools to prepare young people for the world of work. In the light of the current situation with reference to craft unions, shall we offer courses in Sheet Metal work to Negro or Puerto Rican youth? Shall we continue to train Negro and Puerto Rican plumbers or carpenters or electrical workers or other skilled workers? As educators, we know that motivation plays a tremendously important part in the ability to learn. When society limits or denies the right to work of any group, it has automatically set limits upon the learning ability of every one of the individuals within that group. The denial of employment to four Negro and Puerto Rican plumbers is more than an economic or social fact. It is an educational fact of very great significance.

Seventh, and last, we have neglected to take advantage of a new and tremendously important development in the education of Negro children.

It would be difficult, I think, to overestimate the importance of the current civil rights protests in changing the traditional stereotype of the Negro. From this point of view, the positive influence on the motivation for learning of Negro children is incalculable. In the past, the operation of the self-fulfilling prophecy has tended to limit their aspirations and diminish their achievement.

The present public protests take the traditional role of the Negro and turn it upside down. Where he was supposed to be passive, he is active; instead of yielding, he is stubborn; he is non-violent rather than violent, intellectual when he is expected to be stupid, and leading when he should be following. In the long run, the protests in and of themselves may have more positive influence than the changes they bring about. As educators, we must learn to apply this new development in classes and schools and to use it as a lever for instructional improvement.

One hundred and twenty years ago, Horace Mann referred to education as, ". . . beyond all other devices of human origin . . . the great equalizer of the conditions of men . . . the balance wheel of the social machinery." This philosophy must be extended to meet the challenge of modern mass education. In a very real sense, education must redress the social balance for the disadvantaged in order to extend to them a measure of equal opportunity. The schools must be organized and teachers trained to accomplish this task. Our failure to do so will spell the end of the American dream of progress through education.

Let us be clear about segregation. Whether it be blatant in the South or subtle in the North, it saps and diminishes democracy and justice. Whether it exists by law or by custom, by edict or by tradition, by terns of housing, segregation hurts patterns of unemployment or patall children, Negro and white alike.

—Francis Keppel, June 29, 1964